Dr. Briggs' Eulogy.

on

Abraham Lincoln.

EULOGY

ON

Abraham Lincoln,

BY

GEORGE W. BRIGGS, D. D.

JUNE 1, 1865.

WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
ON THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT.

SALEM, MASS.
1865.

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CITY OF SALEM.

At a special meeting of the City Council, called for the purpose, April 17th, 1865, the Mayor communicated the decease of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, to the two branches in convention, as follows:

Gentlemen of the City Council:

I have convened the City Council that you may manifest your sense of the severe bereavement which has so suddenly fallen upon the country.

Amid the jubilant anthems of a loyal people, as the bow of promise and hope was beginning to illumine the clouds that had darkened our country's horizon, even while the dew-drops of pity were tempering to too lenient mercy the policy of its kind hearted victim toward his deluded countrymen, the assassin hand that for four long years has been raised against the national life, has stricken down in cruel murder the chosen and beloved Chief Magistrate of our land.

The earthly life of Abraham Lincoln is finished. The tears of a grateful country are freely flowing to his memory. He has gained all that life can give. He has won his crown of immortality through that sublime patriotism which gave to his country every throb of his pure and tender heart. This most gigantic crime of modern history could only add the crowning glory of the martyr to the spotless fame of the patriot, as it laid his lifeless body on his country's altar. He has left a brighter

example and a more enduring fame than has fallen to the lot of any other man to leave since Washington illustrated his own life with those same high moral elements of character, purity of purpose, incorruptible honesty, tender humanity, and moral courage, which gave to Abraham Lincoln that hold which he had upon the respect, confidence and affections of the loyal people in all parts of our land. He early learned and never forgot the principles of the fathers of the Revolution on which they built the temple of liberty. Said he on one occasion:

"Now, my countrymen, if you have been inclined to believe that all men are not created equal in those inalienable rights enumerated by our chart of liberty, let me entreat you to look back,—return to the fountain whose waters spring close by the blood of the Revolution. Think nothing of me, take no thought for the political fate of any man whatsoever, but come back to the truths that are in the Declaration of Independence. You may do any thing with me you choose, if you will heed those sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honors I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry and insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. *But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity,—the Declaration of American Independence.*"

Should we not be penetrated with gratitude to God that these prophetic words were not verified in his violent death until he had lived long enough to interpret truly that "*immortal emblem of humanity,*" and to re-enact its first principle by that immortal Proclamation which passed three millions of his fellow beings from a state of bondage, to one of unconditional freedom.

As in the grand crisis of the Revolution, Providence raised up from the humble walks of life one who should be the means of securing the blessings of liberty and independence, so, at a crisis of our country when unholy lust of power and sectional injustice caused the Southern States to forget the memory of the Father of his Country, and trample upon the imperishable lessons of his Farewell Address, Providence from similar humble station in life raised up Abraham Lincoln as a particular favorite

to affirm and re-assert the principles of Washington in the goodness and greatness of his own life, and to be the means of guiding the country from the verge of ruin till in this, His own good time, God has closed the earthly career of the noble Man, the Christian Patriot,—the Saviour of his Country. To the immortal name of Abraham Lincoln the homage of every loyal American heart will be paid. It will not be forgotten so long as Liberty has a friend.

"All the ends he aimed at
Were his Country's, his God's and Truth's."

But it is not the occasion nor is it for me to indulge in lengthened eulogy of our late lamented Chief Magistrate.

His funeral services are officially announced to take place at Washington at 12 o'clock noon, on Wednesday the 19th inst. The various religious denominations throughout the country are invited by the Honorable Assistant Secretary of State to meet in their respective places of worship at that hour, for the purpose of solemnizing the occasion with appropriate ceremonies.

Our sorrowing community will heartily co-operate with you in whatever more formal expression of respect for the illustrious dead you may be pleased to decide upon.

Whereupon the two Branches separated, and the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved,—That the City Council of Salem shares, with unfeigned sensibility, the profound grief of the loyal people of the United States, in view of the sudden death, by the hand of violence, of Abraham Lincoln, the honored and beloved Chief Magistrate of our country. An event so impressive in itself, and accompanied by acts of such awful criminality, renders us more than ever conscious of the great and desperate character of the struggle from which our government is now just emerging, and of the value of the precious sacrifices which have been required of our people. We recognize that in this inexpressibly sad and fearful event not only was a patriotic, magnanimous, and admirable magistrate stricken down in the highest place of our land, but that the

assassin's blow was aimed at the country itself. In view of such perils, and such wickedness, it becomes all loyal people to renew their confidence in the Divine Providence as leading and directing the cause of the nation, and when the exultation of victory is suddenly changed into mourning we may accept it as an admonition that there are still further trials and duties before us, ere the blessings of a free and stable government shall be perfectly secured.

Resolved, That the City Council recommends to the citizens that, in accordance with the suggestions of the Acting Secretary of State, they assemble, on the day of the Funeral of President Lincoln, in their respective houses of worship, for religious exercises, and that the Mayor be requested to cause such further notice to be taken of the solemn occasion as he may deem suitable.

Resolved, That we extend our heartfelt sympathy towards Mrs. Lincoln in her appalling sorrow, and to the members of her family.

Resolved, That the City Council regards the murderous and desperate attack upon the Secretary of State with abhorrence and indignation, and rejoices in the assurance that the assassin's blows failed of their deadly purpose.

Resolved, That the present occasion suggests the further duty of acknowledging the lawful authority of Andrew Johnson, now President of the United States, and of recognizing the loyal purpose, the patriotic fidelity, the firm character and the eminent services which he has contributed to the public cause. We pledge to him the prompt, cordial, and unhesitating support of the loyal people of Salem, and offer him our best wishes for success in the responsible and trying, but noble duty that he has undertaken.

Resolved, That the two Chambers of the City Council be hung with appropriate mourning drapery, for the space of thirty days; and that the members of the city government wear the usual badge of mourning for the same period.

Resolved, That a copy of these Resolutions be sent to Mrs. Lincoln, to the President, and to the Secretary of State.

In City Council, April 24, 1865—An order was adopted that a Eulogy be delivered before the City Council on the life and character of our late beloved Chief Magistrate, Abraham Lincoln, and the Joint Committee appointed to take requisite action invited the Rev. George W. Briggs to pronounce the Eulogy at Mechanic Hall, June 1, 1865, that day being designated by the President of the United States as a National Fast Day.

In City Council, June 12, 1865, the following Resolves were adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to the Rev. George W. Briggs, for the Eulogy delivered on the character of President Lincoln, and a copy of the same be requested for publication.

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to the Rev. Edward S. Atwood, for his services as officiating clergyman on the occasion of the Eulogy on the life and services of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States, delivered before the City Council of the City of Salem, June 1, 1865: and also to the Arion Musical Club, for the Musical Exercises performed by them on the same occasion.

Salem, June 13th, 1865.

Rev. George W. Briggs, D. D.

My Dear Sir:

Pursuant to a Resolve of the City Council, a copy of the eloquent Eulogy, delivered by you upon our late lamented Chief Magistrate, is requested for publication.

Very respectfully yours,

JOSEPH B. F. OSGOOD.

Salem, June 15th, 1865.

Hon. J. B. F. Osgood,

Mayor of Salem:

My Dear Sir,—In compliance with your request, I send you a copy of the Eulogy upon Abraham Lincoln, delivered before the authorities of the City on the National Fast Day.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE W. BRIGGS.

ADDRESS.

Mr. Mayor, and

Gentlemen of the City Council:

It was most natural, and fitting, that the first official proclamation of our present Chief Magistrate should set apart a day for the commemoration of the virtues, and the services, of his revered and murdered predecessor. Summoned so suddenly to take his place amidst circumstances so tragic, and so unparalleled, repeating the solemn oath of office by the unburied form of this martyr to his country's cause,—sharing in that love for him which thrilled every loyal breast,—such an appointment was no formality, but an irrepressible impulse of the heart.

What Inaugural Address, indeed, could Andrew Johnson have pronounced more appropriate, or more significant, than an earnest, heartfelt request to the whole people to join with him in offering a tribute to Abraham Lincoln's name? It is fitting that the official representatives of the people, and the people

themselves, moved by a common reverence, should meet in public assemblies, or around Christian altars, for such a purpose to-day. We cannot bring back the intense feeling of the first paroxysm of National grief. When the terrible tidings of crime burst upon us, darkening the world, in the words of Emerson, "like the sudden shadow of an uncalculated eclipse," the unknown depth of our love and trust was suddenly revealed, and a sense of personal sorrow overwhelmed us, almost as if we were standing by a father's bier. Our previous love and reverence became tenfold more deep and fervent through his martyrdom. For it needed only that to give sacredness to the name which had already become so dear; and the assassin only doomed himself to eternal infamy, while he enthroned his victim in unfading glory. No truer tribute was ever paid to purity and greatness than that spontaneous outpouring of sorrow and affection on the Sunday after the assassination. Smitten, pierced with anguish, the nation bent at its altars beneath a passion which the consoling, triumphant promises of that Easter morning had scarcely power to calm.

No Sabbath stillness ever equalled the solemn hush of feeling on the day of the funeral rites. No official request was needed to secure its appropriate observance. Affection outran all official intimations, and

young and old, opponents and friends, the citizen everywhere scarcely less than the freedman who greeted the fallen President as a savior, hastened to pour out the costly, the priceless offering of their reverence. That was the one day, indeed, without a parallel in all our history,—a day divinely appointed, and hallowed, in a people's love.

We cannot repeat that unequalled tribute. Nor would we revive that all absorbing grief even if we could. We shall honor Abraham Lincoln most, not by idle lamentations at his loss, but by a devotion to our country, generous, self-forgetful as his own. But he cannot be forgotten. While our hands are pledged to his work, our hearts will linger by his grave. Indeed his character both deserves and bears our closest study. Clothed in such perfect simplicity, challenging no applause, both its majesty and its beauty so unconsciously worn, we find it putting on new brightness under our loving, yet careful scrutiny.

No occasion consecrated to his memory can ever be a formal service. His name is one of the few, the immortal names that were not born to die. His fame is not simply American, but European also. Both Continents are one in words of Eulogy. More than half a century after the death of Washington, the

Prince of Wales, with his attendant nobles, stood with uncovered heads at his tomb. To-day the people, the scholars, the legislators, the peers, the Queen of England herself, hasten in reverence to Abraham Lincoln's new-made grave. Foreign tributes to his qualities as a man and as a magistrate, to his intellectual strength and his moral greatness, to the purity of his purpose, the dignity of his aims, the splendor of his success; vie with our own offerings of love. Eulogies drop from the most eloquent lips in imperial councils. Not only do these almost universal recognitions of his worth make ample and generous atonement for all the abuse at first heaped upon his name; but those of us who have loved him longest, and revered, confided in him most, find them true to the deepest cravings of our admiration and our love. "Next to Washington," standing "on a pedestal from which he cannot be taken down," "animated by noble sentiments which make us proud of belonging to human nature;"—these words, and such as these, spoken in Europe's different tongues, have been echoed back across the sea. The country loved and honored him, and all the world learned to give him almost equal love and honor—and had the telegraphic wire been laid beneath the ocean to tremble with the tidings of sorrow on the instant of his murder, England and France, and Russia, and Italy and Switzerland,

empires and kingdoms,—the civilized world,—joining with the republic, would have given fitting and simultaneous recognition to his funeral rites.

I think of no parallel to this sudden and almost universal reverence. If language now is tasked abroad and at home to speak his eulogy, only a brief time ago it was exhausted to invent terms of obloquy and of derision. What has wrung respect from Europe, and conquered the world's opinion, and prompted men to recognize him as a peer with kings? What is the enduring basis of his fame? What is his place in our history, and in the world's history, the place which he will hold by that noble manhood which shames all imperial titles, not only in the judgment of to-day, but of coming time?

Here are questions which cannot be fully answered even by the wisest of his cotemporaries. Indeed, unaffected, transparent as he was, the absolute embodiment of true simplicity, it is not easy to sketch the character of Abraham Lincoln, or unveil the hidings of his power. Thrown upon his own resources, compelled to work his own way in boyhood and in manhood, educated by no human teachers, but unfolding his own native endowments alike of mind and heart amidst the rudest privations of the

Western pioneer, while he swung his axe studying as a faithful scholar in the great school of God, he developed into a new type of greatness alike as a man and as a magistrate. He presents an original character in the list of rulers, in the drama of history, as little to be measured by our common standards as that of Washington.

It is easy in the first glance at his life to discover beautiful and attractive qualities. His good nature was unaffected and boundless. He was genial as the sunshine. When he spoke, his plain features became illuminated by his native kindness of heart, and his eye beamed with love. He was absolutely void of all assumption; as simple at the height of power as in the depth of early poverty. Still higher traits were natural to his heart. His honesty and fairness were proverbial. His manliness and courage, his heroism to admit his own mistakes, or accept his just responsibility; his conscientious loyalty to his own convictions of right and duty, were undisputed. His patience increased under difficulties; his toleration amidst opposition. He seemed incapable of passion, or resentment. Jefferson Davis spoke of him only with reviling and abuse; yet it was a frequent practice with Mr. Lincoln to attempt to put himself in Davis's point of view, in order to understand, and if possible,

to palliate, what he must inexorably condemn. No words are adequate to describe his freedom from vindictiveness. Amidst unparalleled provocations he displayed an unsurpassed, if not unequalled magnanimity. No more forgiving spirit has ever lived since the divine prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"—first fell upon human ears; and with words of kindness even for the rebel leaders upon his lips at the meeting of the Cabinet a few hours before his murder,—with the spirit of that divine prayer glowing in his heart, he went from that Council to his martyrdom.

God endowed him with a nature as broad as the prairies of his own adopted State, spontaneously blossoming with all kindly graces, even as those prairies bloom with the beauty of countless flowers. And the stern tests to which his character was exposed added to every native gift a new strength and charm. The moral heroism which made him refuse to follow the pernicious custom of treating his constituents when elected to the Legislature of Illinois in 1834, inspired him to say in 1861, that he could not "count the chances of his own life" in attempting to preserve the institutions of his country,—and that "he would rather be assassinated on the spot than surrender the principles of liberty;" and to declare, in 1863,

"While I remain in my present position, I shall not attempt to retract, or modify the Emancipation Proclamation; nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation, or by any of the Acts of Congress."

The honesty which won for him confidence at first, inspired the nation with ever-deepening trust, and gave to his words "the authority of a vote." The gentleness and kindness native to his heart developed into a humanity alive to every phase of suffering, compassionate to every form of guilt,—immortalizing itself at last by sundering the fetters of the slave. Few men have displayed such winning qualities,—more rarely still have they been blended together with such completeness and harmony. Absolute sincerity and a surpassing shrewdness, the deepest love of humor and the profoundest earnestness, simplicity and strength; an unmatched gentleness, and a martyr's firmness, mingled together, not to moderate but rather to enhance each other,—to make each separate gem seem still more beautiful;—while the whole became a diadem such as it has seldom been given to men to wear.

It was inevitable that the people of his State, among whom he moved in such childlike simplicity,

should recognise his genuine manhood, and make him a Captain in their brief Indian war, a representative in the Legislature, and in the National Congress; the standard bearer of his party in that great canvass for the Senate between himself and Mr. Douglas which first gave him national fame. It was not strange that one who knew him should have said in the Presidential Convention, "I would give ten thousand dollars if I could speak ten minutes in favor of Abraham Lincoln." The nation hardly knew his name until he was nominated as its chief magistrate. The enthusiastic acclamations of his friends wakened feeble echoes. But the nation soon divined his worth when he stood before them so patient, yet so persistent, "so undismayed by disaster, so sober in success, so moderate in provocation, so merciful in victory," so heroic in devotion and in heart,—and bore him triumphantly a second time into the Presidential chair. The people honored him in his life, and followed in one long procession, with gratitude and tears, as he was borne from city to city, far across imperial states, to his forever honored grave.

We must hasten to other thoughts. The leading qualities of his intellect shone out as clearly as the winning traits of his character. He had the most perfect common sense; a remarkable sagacity and

clear-sightedness. He was eminently logical, grasping principles, and following them with most honest and courageous thought to their legitimate conclusions. His views were broad and comprehensive, as well as clear. He had a wonderful ability in separating the vital point at issue from all extraneous questions, and presenting it in absolute simplicity of speech or with a homely aptness of illustration, more irresistible than the most labored argument. Out of his boundless resources of story and of anecdote he would bring the unanswerable illustration to solve the great questions of statesmanship, and to overwhelm ingenious sophistries, with a skill as unerring as that by which Grant moves a division to the exact point to pierce the enemy's line and turn the tide of battle, or Farragut conquers the difficulty of the hour by the inspiration of his courage and his genius. Whatever might be his theme he spoke in the people's native tongue, and great questions became as clear to their understanding as his sincerity was persuasive to their heart. What we call genius may be more brilliant, but nothing is really greater than this. Only a strong mind can gain such perfect mastery of its theme both in thought and speech. Mr. Lincoln often manifested a mental insight which seemed like intuition; an insight almost akin to genius, to which indeed an English critic has unhesitatingly given that noble name.

Here was one great source of his power in that long debate with Mr. Douglas,—and it enabled him so triumphantly to bear his lance against his trained and skilful adversary, that Mr. Douglas's immediate Senatorial success ensured his future defeat, and his own temporary defeat secured his final victory.

The leading qualities of his intellect might indeed be readily seen; but its depth, its real superiority were seldom recognized. He was criticised as slow in thought. Impatient men heaped abuse upon him because he did not keep pace with them. This apparent slowness of his intellect came from his perfect fairness. He must examine and weigh every possible objection, scrutinize every argument on either side, undermine, if possible, the foundation of every doubt, before he gave an absolute decision. He was not the advocate to give himself without reserve to his favorite theory, but the judge, to decide according to the sovereign necessity of the hour; according to immutable and eternal justice. He listened to others' opinions with a readiness, a deference, that often made men question his mental decision. But though he seemed to kindle his torch from every man's candle, it burned with no borrowed light. He was thoroughly real; thinking out every solution for himself; as truly original in his conceptions and his statements as in

his character. Advisers suggested and counselled, but his conclusions and his measures were his own. With no assumption of power he had his own way, and no President was ever more truly the head of his own Administration, alike in the country and the cabinet. He was neither moulded nor overshadowed by the master intellects around him. His clear penetration, his quaint and homely wisdom, matched their diplomacy and statesmanship, compelling respect where opinions differed, and constraining them to recognize him as their peer.

But we can speak of his intellect only in connection with his moral nature. The root of his greatness is found in his honesty and single-heartedness, his unselfishness, and his religious trust. Here were the reasons why the truth shone into his mind without a cloud. The purity of his purpose illuminated, inspired his intellect. The single eye was full of light. It was not strange that his mind had a judicial character. No sinister aims, no personal ambitions or resentments biased his decisions, or dimmed his mental sight Little as we think so, the first law of mental soundness is purity of heart. Truth mirrors itself in the open and guileless soul, as the sky reflects itself in the still and crystal lake. The fear of the Lord is not only the *beginning*, but

the *end* of human wisdom. That spirit which encompasses all human hearts flows into the souls that seek its light, and give it free admission, to counsel and to guide in the great hours of duty, in the solemn exigencies of earthly states. Here seems to me the only true solution of the fact that Mr. Lincoln so wondrously divined his way to the ends which others sought by the arts of statesmanship.

If there is a Providence in history, compelling man to execute its purposes, there is a Providence in the conclusions and the deeds of those who only seek to be the servants of its will. I trace his mental greatness and his moral grandeur alike to this. Thus it was that he gained a sagacity and soundness of judgment even in respect to military matters that will give to some of his letters to successive Generals a lasting interest and fame. The wisdom of his modest suggestions, and deferential criticisms, in the course of the peninsular campaign, has been vindicated by events. The magnanimity of his letter to Grant after the capture of Vicksburg will give it immortal honor. Brothers indeed do they seem, bound together in simplicity of purpose, in magnanimous recognition of every noble service, as well as joined together for all coming centuries as the great leaders in the nation's hour of victory. Here was the foundation of

his loyalty to great convictions of right and duty. Single-hearted in his devotion to duty, moral disloyalty was an impossibility. This loyalty indeed scarcely seemed a special resolve, or even a conscious purpose, but rather the accustomed garb, the habit of his noble nature. His earnestness sprang from the same inspiration. For he was a profoundly earnest man. His sportiveness was only the relaxing of the bow which was tightly strung. "I must have recreation or I die," were his touching words; and he was right. That cry of his burdened spirit might well move us both to admiration and to tears. God fitted him to bear his majestic work by giving him this love of humor which refreshed and reinvigorated his worn and jaded thought. The truest humor is often found in connection with the deepest seriousness in the history of literature and genius; and those who moved men at one hour to laughter, at the next could melt them to tears. His sportiveness was on the surface, seen even by those who could see little else. The artist who painted his portrait in the picture of the Signing of the Proclamation, tells us of the habitual seriousness worn upon his features. We may imagine the pathos of those furrows which responsibility and care ploughed into his face. But no man imagines, no one beneath the heavens knows the agony of earnestness with which he asked himself at times whether he could

be indeed responsible for the awful bloodshed of these terrific battles, as he nerved anew his spirit, gentle as a woman's, to its stern and Providential task.

This conscientious earnestness made him invincibly firm. If he seemed to decide with difficulty, it was only the natural and noble hesitation of one who knew that he should never turn back. Superficial decisions may be lightly and quickly made. The immutable purpose is born in the patience, even the agony of thought. Mr. Lincoln's earnestness and firmness were full of moral beauty. Jackson said, "The Union must be preserved, and treason must be crushed;" Lincoln said, "I have an oath registered in heaven to defend and maintain this Government." One was the outburst of patriotism joined with an imperious will. The other was the true heroic utterance of the martyr spirit.

The foundation of Mr. Lincoln's greatness was in his moral nature. Here is an explanation of his policy, as well as the solution of his life. Recognizing a Providential guidance which it was his single aim to follow, what could he do but shape his course by the logic of events? Seeking to serve, not himself, but his country, humanity, God,—it was for him to keep his ear intently open to the teachings of that Provi-

dence, to interpret, and if possible to execute its divine decrees. It was this that kept him so hopeful amidst defeats, and so humble in victory. Defeat was only a transient check to principles whose final victory was sure. Success was not the triumph of his wisdom, but of God's truth and cause. And here, once more, is the reason why he became truly great amidst the exigencies of the time. It is no disparagement to him to say that his opinions became modified and ennobled in the terrible experience of this national strife. That is historic fact. Instead of detracting from his superiority, it redounds to his honor. Power enlarged his views, and brought out all the graces of his nature. He made mistakes. Perhaps his kindness sometimes overcame the demands of justice. But mistakes were redeemed by his honest purpose, outgrown by his advancing thought. He was placed amidst difficulties and responsibilities unsurpassed in history, and he was capable of learning the solemn lessons of this crisis in the fortunes of the race. He rose to the full demands of the grand hours of Providence. A man of selfish theories, of will, of passion, would have been blind alike to their vital issues, and their sublime instructions. The receptive spirit, the simple, believing, heroic heart, put on dignity and strength for its majestic work.

It is not strange that the world did not recognize his greatness at first. It was the discipline of events that unfolded the golden capabilities of his nature, and displayed its rich resources, its hidden wealth. Thus it was that the unpractised writer, widening in thought as he grew more reverential in spirit, penned a brief speech at Gettysburg, which, in the words of one of our foremost thinkers, "will not easily be surpassed by words on any recorded occasion,"—and bequeathed to us his last Inaugural Address, which has been pronounced in England—"a state paper, that for political weight, moral dignity, and unaffected solemnity, has had no equal in our time." Noble as he certainly was when he left his home in Springfield, asking in such simplicity for the prayers of his friends that he might be divinely assisted in his work;—he was nobler still on his martyr day, ripened for the reverence of centuries. Neither he nor any other man could at first foresee how great his work would be, nor what measures of policy would be demanded for its fulfilment. His greatness lay in the fact that he kept so true and pure that those prayers for which he asked could be really answered; so true and pure that he gained wisdom and strength to perform the work, and fulfil the trusts, of his own place and hour. History is full of failures. Only the royal few wear an unfading crown. A

new name is now placed in that royal company—the name of one "weighed in the balances and not found wanting,"—to be hailed, in the coming time, alike for the mental greatness and the moral grandeur which it represents, with a truer, deeper homage than it wins to day.

We must leave the picture of Abraham Lincoln's character, although so incomplete, to glance at his public service. Measure him by the qualities of his mind and heart, by the singleness of his life, and he wins our admiration. Measure him by the simple grandeur of his aims in the administration of the Government, and by the splendor of his success, and admiration deepens to reverence, and breaks out into thanksgiving. I think that by preeminence he had a Statesman's aim, and did a Statesman's work. It has often been said that he was not a leader,—that he had no distinct political policy, no clearly defined political ideas. He was not a leader in the sense in which that word is usually applied to the chiefs of parties. But he had a political creed,—simple, clear, American; a creed which was itself an inspiration. He stated it in Independence Hall, when he said, "I never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. It was not the mere matter of the

separation of the Colonies from the mother land that kept this Confederacy so long together, but that sentiment in the Declaration which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time; which gave promise, that in due time, the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men."

Grasping the vital idea of the nation with such distinctness, re-incarnating in himself the original genius of the Government, he saw that the existence of slavery was a solecism; and that its extension, and consecration, its nationalization by congressional legislation, and judicial decrees, were absolute apostacy and profanation. How nobly he kept that political faith! When in Congress in 1849, he asked for Emancipation in the District of Columbia, and voted forty-two times for the Wilmot proviso. In the canvas with Mr. Douglas in 1858, he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently, half slave, and half free. It will become all one thing, or all the other." When he went to Washington in 1861, he proposed to save the country on this basis of its original principle of liberty.

I said he had a statesman's aim. What is states-

manship for America but a comprehension of, and fidelity to, the fundamental principles of American nationality, and American life? Abraham Lincoln was statesmanlike in his aims, and statesmanlike in their execution. He was as wise in action, as he was noble in theory. He desired never to transcend his own power, or to violate the liberty of the States, in his attempt to preserve, protect, and defend the Government, and to bring it back, if possible, to its original principles. He could not take the oath of office to get power, and break the oath in using the power—even to indulge his primary, abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. But when it became a military necessity in the judgment of the loyal men of the country, and of his own conscience, he struck it down by Executive power. Sublimely he bore himself while he patiently waited for what would seem to him God's chosen hour. He never wavered in his loyalty to liberty. He took no backward step.

Orators, statesmen, in less dangerous days, in the Senate, and in the country, one by one, had quailed before the rising arrogance of the slave power. In the crisis of the country's agony he said respecting it, "Broken by it? I may be asked to bow to it. I never will. The probability that we may fail in

this struggle is not to deter us from supporting a cause which we deem to be just. It shall not deter me. If ever I feel the soul within me elevate and expand to those dimensions not wholly unworthy of its Almighty Architect, it is when I contemplate the cause of my country deserted by all beside, and I standing up boldly and alone, hurling defiance at her oppressors. Here, without contemplating consequences, before high heaven, and in the face of the world, I swear eternal fidelity to the just cause, as I deem it, of the land, of my life, my liberty, my love." Noble words; nobly spoken, and still more nobly kept. Slavery could murder him, but it could not bend him.

Steadily he watched the necessities and indications of the hour, with his ear intent to catch the accents of Providence, and his hand upon the public heart, till God's time, man's true opportunity, clearly came, and he issued his Proclamation of Emancipation. It has been said that he came to it reluctantly. The reluctance did not arise from a feeble love of liberty, but from his conscientious questionings respecting his own official power. The Proclamation itself was the embodiment of his life-long faith. The spirit of the signers of the Declaration, living within him always, moved him to take his pen and write words immortal as their own. Never was he so manifestly an instrument

in the Almighty's hand as then. The Proclamation was one of the great acts of statesmanship. It paralyzed European hostility, and made foreign intervention impossible. It made the millions of the colored race loyal even to death. More truly than Vicksburg, or Gettysburg, or Atlanta, it decided the issue of the war. But it was more than statesmanship. It was one grand step towards the Christianization of human government, and the civilization of the race. Fitly has it been said that it gives its author a place in universal history. That "*Brutum fulmen*," as it was termed in contempt, was a thunderbolt of God, striking down the most gigantic wrong, purifying the world's atmosphere, heralding serener skies for all lands, and the most distant time.

Abraham Lincoln mastered the problem committed to his hands. He felt that he was acting not merely for a single hour, but for all time. The question for decision was,—"Whether this nation, or any nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, can long endure." "Must a government," he perpetually asked himself, "be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?" He summoned the slumbering war powers of the Constitution to defend its existence, and establish its

sovereignty. He used them so manifestly with a single eye to this supreme necessity, that he did not infringe on the people's liberties.

We have passed through no revolution during this tremendous strife, but repelled one. The outbreak of civil war was only the last act of a drama which opened half a century ago in the demoralization of the public mind in respect to slavery; whose development has gone on through every shifting scene of parties, carried forward as truly by the connivance and concessions of the North as by the increasing arrogance of the South, till the Institution which was once condemned as evil, was exalted as divine; and the idea of human equality, which gave the nation birth, was scouted by judicial decree; and treason to national traditions and national ideas, became treason in arms, to deluge the land in a sea of blood.

Julian, the Apostate, a little less than two years upon the throne, attempted to re-establish Paganism in the place of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. Happily the Apostates of to-day, attempting a revolution almost as monstrous, never gained the throne to establish slavery in the place of liberty. Thanks, we say, a thousand fold, that they did not

gain it, when we contrast the Apostate Emperor's virtues with the worse than Pagan cruelty, and barbaric crimes of slavery.

Abraham Lincoln neither inaugurated, nor accomplished a revolution. That would have justified resistance both South and North, till resistance became despair. He stood against a causeless attempt at revolution, as became the Chief Magistrate of a State; doing nothing, even according to the unfriendly judgment of the London Times, "to aggravate the quarrel, and everything to shorten it, or prevent it," but when treason drew the sword, vindicating the original and fundamental ideas of the Republic.

The only change in our organic law, made not by the sword, but by Constitutional process, is in the adoption of the glorious amendment prohibiting slavery everywhere beneath the flag; a change which only embodies in positive enactment the purpose and wish of the fathers of the nation; what they hoped to have seen accomplished before they went to their graves. It is an amendment which at once gives freedom to the slave, and secures freedom to the free. In the demoralization of national feeling for almost half a century, it has been with this Government as with those immortal pictures whose matchless beauty was

those immortal pictures whose matchless beauty was covered with figures conceived by a corrupt imagination, and drawn by degenerate hands. To Abraham Lincoln it was given to erase the base and demon shapes, and restore to view the original, divine work of genius It has been with us as with the old Jewish people, who once buried their original law from sight, until its rediscovery by one of their purest kings seemed a new revelation to the corrupted nation.

Take away the name of Conservative from those who have usurped it, and give it to this true ruler just laid in his grave, to whom it rightfully and preeminently belongs; to him who re-established our original law, and re-united the nation in its glorious covenant of liberty. Every American exults in the wonderful development of military power during these years of strife. These patriot armies have accomplished what old world generals and rulers pronounced impossible. Leaders have been trained for great achievements both upon land and sea, which will enrol their names among those of the great captains of history.

But I do not chiefly honor Abraham Lincoln for the triumphant military success which gives lustre to his administration. I honor him who brought back our original faith, re-awakening the spirit, re-enthroning

the ideas in which the nation had its birth. Honor to him, who, in old prophetic words, was "the repairer of the breach,"—nay, the destroyer of the breach, by compacting us together into a true nationality of liberty,—who was "the restorer of paths to dwell in." Honor to him to whom it was given to realize his own ideal; to establish the truth which lovers of liberty waited for in expectation, and kings waited for in fear,—that a "government of the people, by the people, for the people," may be as strong, as permanent, as the eternal truth on which it rests.

We repeat the phrase which unconsciously drops from all men's lips, and call him "a providential man." We needed a man who never had a feeling, "politically, that did not spring from the sentiments contained in the Declaration of Independence," to come in the spirit and might of our early faith, as the old prophets came in degenerate days, in the spirit of the true and God-given law. We needed a man of the people to vindicate the people's cause; a man with intellectual shrewdness and power to master the problem of the time, to match the wit of diplomatists, to compel the respect of princes, but "whose pulse twinned with the people's pulses," and whose hand was linked with theirs at every step.

Even the traits which have been criticised fitted

him to meet the exigency of the time. His apparent slowness kept him in sympathy with the popular thought. The lenity which seemed mistaken kindness, a forgetfulness of justice through the plentitude of love, not only preserved his own name free from stain, but saved us from vindictiveness, and made our record pure before the world's watching eyes. Thank God, there has been one civil war in history in which the barbarity belongs to one side of the strife. His very mistakes, so magnanimously admitted, so soon outgrown, only served to deepen confidence in the thorough rectitude of his nature.

Truly as the character of Washington was the bond of Union in Revolutionary times, making it a historic fact that the nation was kept one by his influence, and inhered for a time in his person, so truly has the character of Abraham Lincoln been a bond of Union now. No one else could have so perfectly united the people. He never lost his faith in the *nation's cause*, and the nation never lost its faith in *him* even in the darkest hour.

It was sometimes said that we wanted a dictator. We had one. We did not want a dictator after the pattern of a Cæsar. No French Emperor of to-day can re-establish Cæsarism in public opinion, either by

his sword or pen. That phase of dictatorship is fast becoming obsolete. We did not want a Cromwell who should drive a refractory Parliament out of their seats. We wanted a man whose spirit should embody all the gentleness of the highest Christian civilization, but who still had an oath registered in heaven to uphold, at whatever cost, the sacred cause of liberty; a man who should exercise a practical dictatorship by the simple majesty of truth and character. Was ever man more truly every inch a President? He had a purpose as fixed as the soul of Hampden or of Cromwell. He had an influence in the Cabinet, and in the nation, working often noiselessly, unseen as the forces of nature, yet like them causing the public heart to gravitate towards the single noble end he perpetually served.

Honor every noble service on the field. Honor every faithful soldier of our patriot armies. But while you look here, or there, to eulogize brilliant deeds, honor also the silent power of this rare mind and life, steadily, patiently working, to compact us into a nationality of liberty. The younger Hallam said, "I believe the Bible to be God's book, because it is man's book, and fits into every fold of the human heart." I believe Abraham Lincoln to have been a providential man, because he fitted into all the needs

of this national exigency with an adaptation not otherwise explained. So true was he to his trust, that we give to him the praise. So suited was he to his work, that we give to God the glory.

With a character so rich, and a service so grand, what is his place in history? Shall we compare him with others in order to make his greatness manifest? Look at him for a moment in contrast with Davis, the Cataline of modern days, leaving the Senate stung by denunciations from Andrew Johnson as patriotic and indignant, if not as classic, as those by which Cicero drove Cataline from the Senate of Rome. Contrast the spirit of the two just before the beginning of the war. Abraham Lincoln says, "In my view of the present aspect of affairs, there need be no bloodshed or war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance, that there will be no bloodshed unless it be forced upon the government,—and then it will be compelled to act in self-defence." Jefferson Davis exclaims,—"The time for compromise is past, and we are now determined to maintain our position, and make all who oppose us smell Southern gunpowder, and feel Southern steel." The words of one are those of the Christian patriot, as gentle as he was undismayed and true. Those of the other are the fiery speech of

the traitor, already ripening into the baseness which would consider nothing dishonorable that "struck at the heart's blood of his enemies."

Contrast the true gentleman with the false,—one, homely in speech, often, perhaps, uncouth in manners, but capable of bearing himself with a grace and dignity which prompted Edward Everett to praise, speaking regally at Gettysburg, according to Goldwin Smith, and maintaining always that matchless courtesy that flows from purity and gentleness of heart; the other, polished in utterance, courtly in bearing, but capable of starving prisoners,—with grace of manner glossing over barbarity of soul. Compare the Puritan and the Cavalier as they reappear among the actors of the hour,—the one losing all the sternness of the Puritan, but retaining all his faith and heroism, all that made up his consecrated greatness; the other, observing all the formalities of liturgies, but imperious in will, scorning, trampling upon the lowly in his indomitable pride.

Compare them still once more. One walks the streets of Richmond, lifting his hat in reverence, in unutterable joy, as he receives the greetings of the freedmen who hail him as their Savior, and hears in their exulting shouts the first outpourings of the unending

benedictions which they will heap upon his name. One is ascended now, already welcomed into everlasting habitations by those whom he lifted to the dignity of manhood, or made friends by the noble use of power during their earthly lives, but who had passed on before; by the martyrs to liberty of whom he spoke as so nobly dedicating the field of Gettysburg, and a hundred other scenes of patriotic daring. The other is confined in a dungeon; his name a derision; while, if imagination and conscience fulfil their office, the lusterless faces of those who sank into idiocy, the skeleton forms of those who perished under the fiendish starvation which he suffered the prisoners to endure, will haunt his thoughts in every waking hour, and torture him with avenging dreams. Leave the traitor to his memory, and his fate. We will not look down into hell. We need no such contrast to show Abraham Lincoln's claim to immortal honor. No spirit more quickly than his, indeed, would have looked across the gulf between himself and his fiercest foes, and parted with his honors in order to save even the traitor souls. But not even his inexhaustible magnanimity can save them from the terrible judgment of history.

Unrol the list of patriots for a moment, and compare him with those who held the same place of

power. Will you put him by the side of Jackson, patriotic in every pulse, but imperious; a democrat in theory, but an autocrat in spirit? Will you stop at the name of Jefferson, republican in principle, but aristocratic in education and in taste? Go back to Washington, enthroned above them all by the verdict of the race. You place Lincoln's portrait lower than that of Washington in this hall to-day. In coming days their portraits shall hang side by side, to symbolize the equal glory of their names, the kindred fellowship which their spirits have already found. Washington we revere. Abraham Lincoln we love. One was the father of his country. The other was its deliverer, with the added glory that belongs to the liberator of the slave. We disparage no other man to enhance his honor. Thanks that America is so rich in unfading names. The world is rich in glorious ones. Scarcely has a single month ever given two nobler names to immortality than those of Abraham Lincoln and Richard Cobden. We commit Abraham Lincoln's fame to the judgment of the future without a question respecting its decision. And if any thing could enhance the lustre of that verdict it would be his martyr death. There was a dramatic fitness, and a dramatic completeness in his life. It was fitting that a child of the people should vindicate and uphold the government of the people in the

decisive trial of its power. He has re-possessed every stolen fort, and precisely finished the work which he first proposed. The anthems of victory were sounding in his ear. He was withdrawn when his star touched the zenith, where it shall remain fixed forever. Among the noblest in aims, he was also among the most successful of men. He had compacted the shattered State so firmly together, that even his own murder, trusted, leaned upon as he was, produced no jar, and the power passed into the hands of another child of the people, competent to meet the work that awaits him, to vindicate the majesty of law, to assure the victory of liberty.

In this judgment day of the nation, the tendencies of systems,—the secrets of the heart have been revealed. As has been truly said, we have learned that a democracy is not fickle, nor vicious, nor cruel, but firm and strong; and that a people brave, self-sacrificing and free, is mightier in arms than one equally brave, or equally self sacrificing, but not free. The true character of these clashing civilizations has been exposed. The civilization of justice and liberty has vindicated its humanity, keeping the heart of the people kindly and generous, as well as brave, amidst the unparalleled, and unutterable barbarities of this traitorous war. The civilization which worships

slavery has exposed its vital spirit too. The chivalry that men once honored, "tempered the fierceness of a former age with gentleness. The chivalry of the South infused savage fierceness into this nineteenth century humanity." These were men who have blackened their names by unutterable crimes. But the power which they served, beginning with a contempt for human right, brutalized both its upholders and its victims, and by its logical results, led on to the adoption of worse than barbaric weapons to secure its ends. A striking picture represents the assassin, with his pistol in his hand, looking upon his unsuspecting victim, while a demon shape stands behind him reaching out his finger to prompt him to fire the murderous shot. Slavery is the fiend which has stood behind its defenders, who more even than the bondmen themselves are its victims, prompting with demon finger to assassinations, to the starving of prisoners, to the butchery of wounded men on the field of battle, to the burning of cities, to the unloosing of the pestilence. By an unerring logic the ideas which men serve finally work out their sublime, or their damning results in character and life. Liberty has vindicated itself to-day. It needs no argument, no plea for its defence. Slavery has unmasked itself. It needs no other indictment to secure for itself eternal infamy. Not alone from fidelity to the principles

which gave the nation birth, not alone from compassion for the bondman, but from love for those whose faith in liberty it had blotted out, even when it had not yet accomplished its brutal and barbaric work upon the character, we will expel slavery from every state or territory beneath our flag, that it may never more pollute a single foot of soil, or curse another soul. What the Declaration of Independence declared in immortal words, the banner shall re-announce forever by its glorious and multiplying stars. We will build our martyred President's truest monument,—a nation re-baptized and consecrated by the principles which were his own continual inspiration. States, society itself, must be re-constructed in the interest of liberty. The spirit of the Mayflower, not of the slave ship, is to rule this continent. Punishing, disfranchising the few, but pardoning the many, we are ready to welcome back the returning prodigals with a true and unrestricted love. But they must come back in penitence, renouncing the harlot of slavery, swearing unreserved allegiance to the divine law of liberty. We will commit the government of traitorous States to none but loyal hands. Disloyalty shall no longer corrupt our politics, or profane our air. If it shall attempt to accomplish through the ballot box what it has failed to accomplish by the sword, then, alien as it is to our wishes and our purpose, let

military power retain its sway till loyalty is secure. Henceforth we are not to have the statesmanship, or rather the apostacy from statesmanship, which compromises the ideas of liberty. In those undying words at Gettysburg, this nation is "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." The earth is the Lord's, and all its kingdoms should be his; but this Continent, at least, shall politically acknowledge the Golden rule. Asserting the rights of manhood for all men, it shall assure to all men the privileges of manhood. The spirit of caste shall be swept out of our hearts, even as the word slavery is to be swept out of our statute books. The black man, helping us in revolutionary times to establish the government, and in these traitorous days to save it—his soul white with loyalty, brave unto the end, shall enjoy the privileges partly purchased by his heroism and his blood. The hand that uses the rifle must cast the ballot for liberty. Whatever limitations there may be in the exercise of suffrage, we shall put away the sacrilege that recognizes the distinction of color, nationality, race. I do not fear these problems of statesmanship. Events will give the nation wisdom and skill to solve the problems of days of peace as of war. The Republic will train up its leaders and statesmen out of its humblest homes in the future as in the past. Our fathers' God has been, and will be, our God forever. This is no day for poli-

ticians, who, now that doctrines of liberty have become national, hasten to serve them as they once served the behests of slavery, because that is the way to place and power. We want no money-changers in this temple of freedom and of God. We want men consecrated to liberty, as our heroic soldiers consecrated themselves to their country,—as he was consecrated whose name we honor to-day, and shall honor forever. We register our oath in heaven to that self-consecration. We love our country all the more since she has passed through these purifying fires; since "every drop of blood drawn by the lash has been paid by another drawn by the sword;" since we can hope for, and have a country still more worthy of undying love and honor. Prosperity, greatness, dominion, will come with justice and with liberty. When, in Abraham Lincoln's golden words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, we strive to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations,"—we shall have built his best and grandest monument; one conferring upon ourselves the truest honor, to stand as the sublimest testimony to his eternal fame.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, May 27, 1865.

STEPHEN P. WEBB, ESQ.,

City Clerk of Salem, Mass.,

SIR :—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of certain resolutions, adopted by the City Council of Salem, Mass., on the occasion of the assassination of the late President of the United States, and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State. The sentiments so eloquently expressed in these resolutions, and the testimony they bear to the elevated character of the late Chief Magistrate, are fully and gratefully appreciated.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

W. HUNTER, ACTING SECRETARY.

Order of Exercises

AT MECHANIC HALL, SALEM, JUNE 1, 1865.

EULOGY.....by Rev. George W. Briggs, D. D.
RELIGIOUS SERVICES.....by Rev. Edward S. Atwood.
MUSICAL EXERCISES.....by the Arion Club, M. Fenollosa, Conductor.

I. MOTET.

"Almighty Lord before thy throne,"—W. M. Byrnes.

II. READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Selections: — Joel i. 2, 3. 2 Sam. i. 19. Jer. xlviii. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 1—11. Job xxix. 11—17, 21, 25. 1 Corinth. iii. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. Josh. xxiii. 14. 2 Chron. xvi. 14. 2 Kings xxiii. 30. 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

III. PRAYER.

IV. HYMN, by Rev. Jones Very.

O God! who dost the nations lead,
  Though oft in ways to them unknown;
To Thee we look, in this our need,
  A suppliant people seek thy throne.

For he, whom thou didst raise to guide,
  Has fallen by the assassin's hand;
In Thee alone would we confide
  To guard, to guide, to save our land.

Through perils great, from year to year,
  Thou hast thus far our nation brought;
And given the victory to cheer,
  And, by our Chief, deliverance wrought.

With earnest prayer he sought thy will,
  In all the great events of life;
And nobly did his work fulfil,
  Through four long years of bloody strife.

O, lift us up in this sad hour,
  Let not our Country's foes prevail;
Sustain us by thy mighty power,
  Let not to us thy promise fail!

May Justice, Liberty, and Peace,
  For which his life he freely gave,
Bless all our land; and never cease
  To shed their glory round his grave.

V. EULOGY.

VI. HYMN, by A. C. Goodell Jr.

O Thou who givest life
And takest it again;
Who, as a father lovingly,
O'er all mankind dost reign;
Our refuge and protector when
The King of kings was slain,—

In this our time of grief
And doubt we come to Thee!
Thou only canst assuage our woe;
And, from thy throne, we see
That, in the things we chiefly doubt,
There is no mystery.

If we did never turn
Away from thy dear face,
If we did never faithless grow
And loosen thy embrace,
Then doubt and fear would never find
In us a dwelling-place.

Then, through the deepest gloom
That ever shrouds our way,
Our hearts would never faint,—our eyes
Would never miss the ray
Which, like the rising morning-star,
Heralds the perfect day.

Trusting thy sovereign will,
Confiding in thy care,—
As knowing that Thou kinder art
Than earthly parents are,
And that Thou lovest whom Thou call'st
The cruel cross to bear,—

Then we should cease to mourn
For them—the good and wise—
Whom Thou dost set on earth to be
A light unto our eyes,
But whom, in thy good time, Thou tak'st
To shine in paradise.

VII. BENEDICTION.

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